

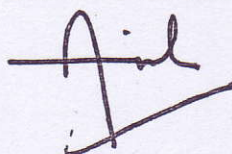
GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Contents

Foreword	vii
Preface	ix
Acknowledgements	xiii
Introduction	xv

THEME 1 ISSUES ON HIGHER EDUCATION POLICIES	1
1 Academic Freedom and the Changing Nature of Faculty Work in an Age of Globalisation <i>William G. Tierney</i>	3
2 The Public University Governance: The Missing Parameters <i>Hazman Shah Abdullah and Sarina Othman</i>	17
3 Relationship between Organisational Culture and Knowledge Management: Scenario of a Malaysian Higher Education Institution <i>Sharimllah Devi Ramachandran and Siong Choy Chong</i>	35
4 The Need for Arabic Language in Malaysia in the Era of Globalisation <i>Lubna Abd. Rahman and Wan Azura Wan Ahmad</i>	57
5 National Unity and Higher Education: A Case Study of Universiti Malaysia Sabah <i>Vincent Pang, Amran Ahmed and Ho Chong Mun</i>	70
6 The Role of Career Services in Facilitating Work Experience through Practical Training and Industrial Attachment in International Islamic University Malaysia <i>Danial Mohd. Yusof, Shukran Abdul Rahman, Hariyati Shabrina Abdul Majid, Ainol Madziah Zubairi, Saodah Wok and Noor Azlan Mohd. Noor</i>	82

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- 16 Profiling the First-Degree Graduates' Employability: A Longitudinal Analysis
Saadab Wok, Shukran Abdul Rahman, Hariyati Shabrima Abdul Majid, Noor Azlan Mohd. Noor, Ainol Madziah Zubairi and Daniel Mohd. Yusof

- 17 The Role of Values in Determining Graduates' Employability and Satisfaction of Academic Programmes
Shukran Abdul Rahman, Hariyati Shabrima Abdul Majid, Saadab Wok, Noor Azlan Mohd. Noor, Daniel Mohd. Yusof and Ainol Madziah Zubairi

- 18 The Role of Higher Education Providers to Facilitate Organisational Learning and Human Capital Development in the Face of Globalisation: The Experience of INTI International College Penang
Kecy Ting Hoo, William Wong Teck Foo and Cheah Teong Keat

- 19 Investigating the Determinants of University Life Happiness in Malaysia: The Case of Universiti Utara Malaysia and Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
Lim Hock-Eam, Kuar Lok-Sin and Thi Lip-Sam

- 20 Studying in Australia: A Quality Experience?
Peter Kell and Gillian Vogl

- 21 Fostering Research in the Humanities, Arts, Education and Social Sciences in an Australian University: Scaling Up for Greater Impact
Sue McGinty

Contributors

Index

- 7 Student Strikes and Class Boycotts as a Governance and Leadership Issue in Higher Education: Impact on Curriculum Implementation in the University of Botswana
Joseph Thoko Matsoga

- 8 Parental Expectation and Students' Educational Preferences and Choices: Implications for Research and Policy
Premalatha Karupiah

- 9 Utilisation of Teaching and Research Spaces in the Engineering Campus, Universiti Sains Malaysia
Linariza Haron and Hamdan Mohd. Hassan

- 10 Mathematics for Numeracy and Technical Talent: The Nexus Among Practitioners, Researchers and Higher Education Policy Makers in Asia Pacific
Mohan Chinnappa

- 11 The Need for Higher Education in the Developmental State: Indonesia and Malaysia
Georgia Lysaght

- 12 Developing a University Model for Malaysia: The USM Story
Mohd. Azhari Abdul Karim

THEME 2 ISSUES ON HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY

- 13 Performance Measurement System, Performance Indicators and Funding Mechanism in Malaysian Public Universities: A Conceptual Framework
Mohd. Anuar Mazuki, R. Ravindran and Syed Musa Albabsbi

- 14 Estimating a Translog Cost Function for State Universities and Colleges in the Philippines
Mirzie Irene Ponce-Conchada

- 15 Identifying Key Performance Indicators for Governance of Public Universities in Malaysia: Issues and Considerations
Hazadiab Mohd. Dahan, Chan Yuen Fook and Gurnam Kaur Sidhu

Profiling the First-Degree Graduates' Employability: A Longitudinal Analysis

SAODAH WOK, SHUKRAN ABDUL RAHMAN, HARIYATI SHAHRIMA ABDUL MAJID,
NOOR AZLAN MOHD. NOOR, AINOL MADZAH ZUBAIRI AND DANIAL MOHD. YUSOF

study. Based on the constructs, relevant variables were identified and these were further used to prepare items for both the questionnaires and the interviews.

Possessing adequate content knowledge and high technical knowledge may not be sufficient to ensure the success of a nationwide project. Finally, what is most important is having "people" skills. A research project requires all researchers to have good communication and interpersonal skills coupled with the ability to work cooperatively and collaboratively with both research team members and respondents. On top of that, the success of any research project often lies in the hands of a good research leader who must be a good listener, open-minded and willing to accept ideas "outside the box."

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Introduction

First-degree graduate employability problem aggravates annually. This has appalled many sectors, the higher education institutions, parents, community and the graduates themselves. As such, a longitudinal study is called for to help gauge what really is needed by the graduates to equip themselves with the relevant characteristics so that they are marketable and the problem of employability is lessened. On the part of the higher education institutions, they too, need to be prepared and to adjust to the needs of the industry. Various debates, seminars and meetings conducted have shed light into the issue concerned. This chapter aims to find out:

1. The personal characteristics of the graduates who are likely to be hired compared to those who are unemployed.
2. The institutional characteristics and support mechanism that help promote graduates opportunities in securing jobs.

Graduate Employability

Employability, the capability of being employed in a job, has received a government concern and more efforts have been geared towards making the problem of unemployed graduates tangential to the development of the nation. The number of graduates leaving the universities increases annually. As such, the number of graduates supersedes the number of vacancies available in the market. Therefore, the marketability of the graduates is at stake.

Employability is about how individuals take advantage of opportunities, and to reflect and cultivate their skills and experience (Harvey and Moray, 2007).

The personal traits of the individuals play an important role in the rate of employability. An example is the gender of the graduates. Males tend to get hired more than females (Latifah, Saodah and Alias, 2003).

Another factor that contributes to being employed is academic achievement. Such achievement is reflected by the graduates' cumulative grade point average (CGPA). CGPA indicates how well the graduates perform in terms of their understanding of the theory-based knowledge. Those with higher CGPA are more likely to be employed than those with lower CGPA (Shukran et al., 2004a; 2005a).

Work experience is another factor that relates to employability. Crammer (2007) highlighted the importance of employ-based training and experience in an effort to help graduates obtain their job. At the same time, employer involvement in courses support graduates in their transitional stage of getting the job. Little (2003) noted that employers place high value on new recruits with working experience. They believe that graduates should be able to reflect constructively on issues related to work, such as how they have managed situations or learned from work experiences. In the United Kingdom (UK), the majority of undergraduates tend to undertake temporary employment during vacations to gain work experience outside their studies. A number of authors such as Costlow (2004), Callanan and McCarthy (2003), and King (2003) said that graduates should have real-work experience that they may acquire through various ways such as internship and practical fieldwork. This is imperative because the balance between knowledge and practice would benefit the individuals, industry, and society. Therefore, skills development training is needed to help graduates secure jobs. The skills provided by the universities are thought to be different from the skills that the students required in getting jobs.

Employability is also found to be associated with equipping graduates with generic or transferable skills. The transferable skills also add value to the chance of being employed. Some called such skills as employability skills. Employability skills teach the graduates how to get a job and to keep it. Employers seek graduates with employability skills and with relevant working experience. The

institutions concerned should be responsible not only to train the graduates but also to produce graduates who are highly employable. The outcomes of developing employability are that the higher education institutions are able to develop an individual student's skills, abilities and qualities. Higher education should also develop the graduates' self-promotional and career management skills, thus creating graduates who are willing to learn and able to reflect on acquired learning. It is an important role of higher education institutions to be able to make the fresh graduates able to be employed.

There are some missing skills that are not taught in the universities. Such skills are the networking building skills and understanding clients' business problems. Employability, therefore, is a set of achievements, understanding and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in the chosen occupations. Therefore, it is important for higher education institutions to take heed on employability because it reflects the performance of the university concerned.

Institutional Characteristics in Promoting Employability

The institutional characteristics have some bearing in equipping the graduates with the necessary environment and learning culture conducive for producing employability graduates. Among the characteristics that are thought deemed necessary are the academic programme, availability of quality counselling and career services, teaching staff and the university facilities (Shukran et al., 2004a; 2005a; 2006).

Academic programme

The academic programme should be tailored towards giving graduates the opportunity to work in various sectors, enabling them to further their studies so that they have better opportunities to be employed at a higher position, providing them sufficient skills to perform duties, being relevant to their present job, and providing them sufficient skills for community development besides suiting their interest so that they will study hard to accomplish their academic goal and performance.

Counselling and career services

The services are deemed necessary to expose students to interview techniques and writing, and to prepare them for the job market. Seminars and workshops are held for the students to participate. The skills given are tailored towards equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills relevant to the job, enabling them to play an effective role in community development, giving the opportunity to work in various sectors, developing human relations skills, enhancing leadership skills, increasing communication skills, improving time management skills and developing teamwork spirit.

Teaching staff

Teaching staff is another aspect that promotes students' employability. The teaching staff should be advanced in practical knowledge and theoretical knowledge, able to interact with students, are innovative and creative in teaching, have the knowledge on current practices in the industry, have up-to-date knowledge on general issues, good at delivery skills, have high qualifications, and have research and development (R&D) activities.

University facilities

Quality university facilities with up-to-date technology and quality services are necessary to help promote graduates towards being hired. Among the facilities are modern library facilities and services, well-equipped laboratories especially computer laboratories, quality counselling and career services, well equipped admissions and records division, a comprehensive student affairs and development division, and a well informed alumni relations section.

Expectations of Employers in Malaysia

Basically, the expectations of employers in Malaysia are similar to those stated above. Their expectations can be classified into a number of dimensions: academic qualification, work experience, knowledge, skills and capabilities, and relevant personality (Shukran et al., 2006).

Academic qualifications

Employers in Malaysia prefer graduates with relevant qualification that match specific job requirements, especially those with excellent academic performance or had obtained postgraduate degrees such as PhD or masters, double-major degrees or professional qualifications. They also choose the cream among the pool of applicants during recruitment.

Experience

Employers prefer to recruit graduates with a minimum of one-year working experience. This is due to the high likelihood that they can have fast adjustment with team-mates and understand the demand of employers. They may also work independently with less supervision.

Knowledge

Employers have the tendency to select graduates with multiple and broad knowledge such as knowledge on companies act, labour and industrial relations laws, basic accounting and marketing, computer, information and communication technology (ICT), and statistics. Besides that, they also prefer graduates who are trainable and willing to acquire new knowledge.

Skills

Employers will recruit graduates with relevant soft skills, besides the hard skills or skills in a particular discipline, such as technical or other competency skills. Language skills, especially English language proficiency, communication skills, thinking skills, planning and administrative skills, and ICT skills are instances of desirable skills. In fact, employers seek graduates who are multi-skilled and able to multitask.

Among the highly weighted skills are communication skills, which requires an individual to possess the ability to present ideas orally in group discussions, provide spontaneous ideas, negotiate, lead and manage, explain issues and problems, and speak up in a constructive manner. Written communication skills,

such as ability to write reports, project papers, minutes of meeting, official letters and memoranda, are also important.

The other equally essential skill is thinking skill. Employers look for graduates with an analytical ability which can generate critical and creative ideas, produce high quality work with minimal errors and able to understand issues. As far as planning and administrative skills are concerned, employers will employ graduates with the ability to manage time effectively, draw effective plans of action, decide effectively and work in a team.

ICT skills require graduates to be able to use computer for information gathering, information processing, communication, presentation of information and word processing.

Personality and attitudes

In addition to the above factors, other vital factors that boost employers' preferences are graduates' self-confidence, integrity, trustworthiness, resourcefulness, ability to work smart, open mindedness and understanding, great interest in the company or job, good values and aptitude, discipline (e.g. punctual, loyal), high teamwork spirit (e.g. information sharing), fast track achiever, commitment towards company, problem solver or troubleshooter.

Employers also look for graduates with certain capabilities. First, operative capabilities, which require a graduate to efficiently operate business, that is, plant and production process; second, adaptive capabilities, which require a graduate to modify or adjust technology procured to reduce costs and match products with consumer preference; and third, innovative capabilities, which require a graduate to anticipate future demands and tailor to consumer requirements, besides improving efficiency and productivity concurrently.

Employers also have a set of expectations towards new graduates. They are expected to maintain excellent performance, possess high moral values, have good discipline and good conduct, enhance company's good image, safeguard company's trade secret and generate profiles for the company.

Shukran et al. (2006) in their study on employers' expectation of graduates found that the employers prefer graduates with good standing in CGPA, relevant programmes to the job, good communication skills, practicum or industrial attachment experience and good teamwork spirit.

Zabid (2003) indicated that graduates' failure to secure jobs is attributed to both personal and non-personal factors. Among other things are the lack of work experience, work skills, self-confidence and grooming.

The problem of mismatch between employers' expectations and employee capability exists. As such, the present study tries to determine factors that differentiate between the employed and the unemployed over the years so that the problem of unemployment can be taken into consideration and strategic planning can be proposed to relevant authorities to respond accordingly. Nevertheless, actions can only be taken into consideration provided there are evidences and statistics of which this study tries to shed some light for improvement pertaining to the graduates' employability.

Methodology of the Study

The population of the study

The respondents of the three-year studies were the bachelor's degree graduates from various *kulliyah* (faculties) in the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The number of respondents was 1,838; 2,328; and 2,234 for the year 2003, 2004 and 2005, respectively. The response rate for the study was 87 per cent, 94 per cent and 91 per cent for the year 2003, 2004 and 2005, respectively (see Table 1).

Research procedure

The method used for the cohort study is survey method using mailed questionnaire. Tracer study questionnaire prepared by Economic Planning Unit (EPU) was incorporated by employability questions developed by the Alumni Relations Unit, IIUM and then mailed to the graduates of the 19th, 20th and 21st graduation ceremony, two months prior to the graduation day. The

graduates were asked to submit their respective questionnaires on the rehearsal day or to the Alumni Relations Unit.

Research instrument (questionnaire)

Basically, the questionnaire consists of two parts, Part 1 and Part 2. The first part of the questionnaire was developed by EPU from the Prime Minister's Department and the second part was developed by the Alumni Relations Unit, IIUM. Part 1 comprises six sections as follows:

1. Respondents' background
2. Views on programmes and services offered by the university
3. Further studies
4. First job and placement
5. Current job placement and employment
6. Suggestions towards improving the teaching and learning methods in IIUM

Part 2 consists of four sections as listed below:

1. Islamisation efforts
2. Academic programmes
3. Co-curricular activities
4. Facilities and services

Data analysis

The data were analysed using SPSS 12 WIN. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the data analysis to help answer the objectives of the study. In the descriptive statistics, frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation (SD) were employed. Discriminant analysis was used to determine the factors used to differentiate between employed and unemployed graduates. Profiling of the personal characteristics and the institutional promotional factors were done accordingly.

TABLE 1 Background information of the tracer study (2003–2005)

Background information	2003 ^a	2004 ^b	2005 ^c
Total no. of questionnaire sent based on no. of graduates (first-degree graduate and postgraduates)	2,584	2,489	2,456
Response rate	87%	94%	91%
No. of valid respondent of first-degree graduates	1,838 (82.1%)	2,328 (100.0%)	2,234 (100.0%)
No. of female of first-degree graduates	1,243 (67.6%)	1,574 (67.6%)	1,556 (69.7%)
No. of male of first-degree graduates	595 (32.4%)	754 (32.4%)	678 (30.3%)
Duration of data collection	August–September 2003	July–August 2004	July–August 2005
Convocation	19th	20th	21st
Employment status of first-degree graduates	1,047 (56.9%)	1,229 (52.8%)	1,178 (53.3%)

Source: ^aShukran et al. (2004a), ^bShukran et al. (2005a), ^cShukran et al. (2006)

Findings of the Study

The findings of the study are presented in terms of (1) employment pattern, (2) the personal characteristics apt for employability, (3) institutional promotional characteristics for first-degree graduates and (4) discriminating factors for employability.

Employment pattern

Table 2 shows the employment pattern of first-degree graduates from 2003 to 2005. Across the board, the employability rate of IIUM first-degree graduates is roughly one in every two. The duration taken by graduates to secure a job is less than three months, with 88 per cent of them were employed in 2003. The percentage increased to 93 per cent in 2004 but decreased to 87 per cent in 2005. About 4 in 10 of the graduates were able to secure a permanent job, with 41 per cent, 40 per cent and 43 per cent for the year 2003, 2004 and 2005, respectively. About one-third of the graduates were working on a temporary basis and contract basis. The number for contract workers increases over the years from 19 per cent in 2003 to 24 per cent in 2004 and to 28 per cent in 2005. However,

the number of graduates working on temporary bases decreases, that is, from 38 per cent in 2003 to 33 per cent in 2004 and 27 per cent in 2005. Their income varies from year to year. As of 2003, 62 per cent of the graduates received an income of between RM501–RM1,500, while more than half of the graduates received RM500 or less in 2004. However, in 2005 more than half of the graduates received RM501–RM1,500. The sectors that employed them do not reflect major variation across the years. Basically, the government employed one-third of the graduates, with 35 per cent in 2003, 33 per cent in 2004 and 32 per cent in 2005. The number of graduates employed by local private companies also decreased. However, the percentage of multinational companies employing IIUM graduates increase over the years from 11 per cent in 2003 to 12 per cent in 2004 and 15 per cent in 2005.

Personal characteristics apt for employability

CGPA is crucial in getting a job. Table 3 shows that about 6 per cent of the graduates managed to secure CGPA of 3.5 and above in 2004 and only 4 per cent in 2005. Those who obtained CGPA between 3.0–3.5 made up one-third of the graduates with 35 per cent in 2004 and 32 per cent in 2005. The bulk of the graduates obtained CGPA of less than 3.0. Another weakness of the IIUM graduates is their inability to be proficient in the third language. This might add to their inability to get employed. However, other personal characteristics related to employability are good, with mean ranging from 3.3 to 4.4, on a 5-point scale in 2004 and with mean ranges from 3.5–4.3 in 2005. This means that IIUM graduates are very good in workplace adaptability, very good at problem solving skills, confident in performing the job, very good at team working skills, proficient in spoken and written English, proficient in spoken and written bahasa Malaysia, very good in using computer application and very good at acquiring knowledge relevant to job.

TABLE 2 Employment pattern of first-degree graduates by year of graduation (2003–2005)

Employment pattern	Frequency (%)		
	2003	2004	2005
Securing job	1,047 (56.9)	1,229 (52.8)	1,178 (53.3)
Duration to secure first/current job			
< 1 month	33.3	72.7	46.5
1–3 months	54.8	20.6	40.7
4–6 months	9.9	5.9	12.8
7–9 months	2.0	0.8	–
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Means of getting the first/current job			
Friend/family	52.2	55.2	46.3
Advertisement/print media	18.4	17.8	19.9
Internet	4.8	7.5	10.0
Offer from the employer during industrial attachment	3.4	5.5	3.9
Manpower department/labour department	3.7	2.2	2.8
Employment agency	3.5	2.4	1.6
Counselling and career unit	2.1	2.6	4.5
Others	11.7	6.8	10.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Job status of first/current job			
Permanent	40.6	38.9	43.2
Contract	19.1	24.4	27.6
Temporary	38.0	33.4	27.3
Employer	0.2	0.7	0.2
Self-employed	1.4	1.4	1.6
Working for family	0.7	1.1	1.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Monthly income (RM)			
< 500	9.9	53.5	12.2
501–1500	62.0	31.9	52.5
1501–2500	28.1	14.6	35.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Employment sector			
Government	35.4	33.1	31.3
Statutory body	5.7	4.6	5.0
Local private company	30.3	29.3	25.6
Multinational company	11.0	12.1	15.0
Own company	10.3	11.1	10.1
Others	7.3	9.7	13.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

TABLE 3 Personal characteristics of the first-degree graduates apt for employability by year of graduation (2003–2005)

Personal characteristics	Year of graduation (%)		
	2003	2004	2005
CGPA			
2.00–2.50		320 (13.6)	283 (13.1)
2.51–3.00		1,060 (44.9)	1,116 (51.8)
3.01–3.50	Not available	832 (35.2)	678 (31.5)
3.51–4.00		149 (6.3)	76 (3.5)
Total		2,361(100.0)	2,153 (100.0)
	Mean (SD)		
Workplace adaptability	3.6 (0.8)	3.6 (0.8)	3.7 (0.8)
Have problem-solving skills	3.5 (0.8)	3.6 (0.8)	3.7 (0.7)
Confidence to perform job	3.8 (0.8)	3.8 (0.8)	3.9 (0.8)
Team working skills	3.8 (0.8)	3.9 (0.8)	3.9 (0.8)
Communication skills	3.9 (0.8)	3.9 (0.8)	3.9 (0.7)
Proficient in spoken English language	3.7 (0.8)	3.7 (0.8)	3.8 (0.8)
Proficient in written English language	3.8 (0.8)	3.8 (0.8)	3.9 (0.8)
Proficient in spoken bahasa Malaysia	4.4 (0.7)	4.4 (0.7)	4.3 (0.8)
Proficient in written bahasa Malaysia	4.4 (0.8)	4.4 (0.8)	4.3 (0.9)
Proficient in third language	2.7 (1.1)	2.6 (1.1)	2.9 (1.0)
Ability to use computer application	3.9 (0.9)	4.0 (0.9)	4.0 (0.9)
Knowledge ability (relevance of programme content to job)	3.3 (1.0)	3.3 (1.1)	3.5 (1.0)

Institutional promotional characteristics

Table 4 shows the institutional promotional characteristics in helping the graduates in getting the job. In terms of academic, the graduates are not happy with the practical training (mean of 2.8 in 2005 and 3.00 for 2003 and 2004) and the industrial attachment (mean of 2.6 in 2005 and 2.9 in 2003 and 2004) provided by the institution. The rest of the academic programme attributes were rated between satisfactory to very satisfactory. The graduates in 2003 and 2004 were also not satisfied with the counselling and career services in assisting them to obtain job. However, the graduates in 2005 are satisfied with the services rendered to them. As for the teaching staff, the graduates were "satisfied" to "very satisfied" with all attributes of the teaching staff, the highest being the qualifications of the teaching staff. With regards to the university's services, the library received the highest rating (very satisfactory) for the three consecutive years. On the other hand, Alumni Relations Unit, Counselling and Career Services, Student Affairs and Development Unit, and Admission and Records

Division were not rated highly for 2004. For 2005, only Student Affairs and Development Unit, and Admission and Records Division were rated unsatisfactory. In other words, most of the institutional promotional characteristics were considered satisfactory in providing the relevant facilities and services.

TABLE 4 Institutional promotional characteristics for first-degree graduates

Institutional promotional characteristics	Attributes	Level of satisfaction			
		2003	2004	2005	
		Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	
Academic programme	Study programme	3.7 (0.7)	3.7 (0.7)	3.8 (0.8)	
	Theoretical component	3.6 (0.8)	3.7 (0.7)	3.8 (0.8)	
	Practical training	3.0 (1.0)	3.0 (1.1)	2.8 (1.5)	
	Industrial attachment	2.9 (1.1)	2.9 (1.0)	2.6 (1.6)	
	Computer course	3.2 (1.0)	3.3 (0.9)	3.4 (0.9)	
	English language course	3.9 (0.8)	3.9 (0.8)	3.9 (0.9)	
	Foreign language course	3.3 (1.0)	3.2 (1.0)	3.4 (1.0)	
	Inculcation of positive values	4.0 (0.8)	3.9 (0.8)	3.9 (0.8)	
	Skills/knowledge acquired	3.8 (0.7)	3.8 (0.7)	3.9 (0.8)	
	Co-curriculum activities	3.4 (0.9)	3.5 (0.9)	3.5 (0.9)	
Counselling services	Information on job and career	3.1 (0.9)	3.2 (0.9)	3.3 (1.0)	
	Assistance on attending interview skills	3.0 (0.9)	3.1 (0.9)	3.3 (1.0)	
	Assistance to obtain jobs	2.8 (1.0)	2.9 (1.0)	3.2 (1.0)	
Teaching staff	Qualification	4.0 (0.8)	4.0 (0.8)	4.0 (0.8)	
	Theoretical knowledge	3.9 (0.8)	3.9 (0.8)	3.9 (0.8)	
	Up-to-date knowledge on general issues	3.8 (0.8)	3.8 (0.8)	3.8 (0.9)	
	Interaction with students	3.7 (0.9)	3.7 (0.8)	3.7 (0.8)	
	Practical knowledge	3.6 (0.9)	3.6 (0.9)	3.7 (0.9)	
	Delivery skills	3.6 (0.8)	3.6 (0.8)	3.7 (0.8)	
	Knowledge on current practices in the industry	3.5 (0.9)	3.5 (0.9)	3.6 (0.9)	
University facilities	Innovation/creative in teaching	3.4 (0.8)	3.5 (0.8)	3.6 (0.8)	
	Library	4.3 (0.7)	4.1 (0.8)	4.1 (0.8)	
	Computer lab	3.8 (0.8)	3.7 (0.9)	3.7 (0.9)	
	Alumni Relations Unit	3.5 (0.8)	2.4 (1.2)	3.0 (0.6)	
	Counselling and Career Service	3.4 (0.9)	2.5 (1.2)	3.0 (0.7)	
	Student Affairs and Development Unit	3.4 (0.9)	2.9 (0.7)	2.9 (0.7)	
	Admission and Records Division	3.2 (1.0)	2.7 (0.7)	2.9 (0.7)	

Note: Measurement was based on a 5-point scale.

Discriminant factors for employability

When discriminant analysis was conducted to graduates in 2004 and 2005 in terms of personal attributes (Table 5), it is very difficult to predict the employability of the graduates. The correct classification is about 50:50, meaning that there are other factors that contribute to employability of the graduates. Teamwork skills (Chi-square = 9.74, $p = .04$) appeared to be the discriminating factor in 2004 but it did not appear in 2005. In other words, it is difficult to predict the employability of the graduates based on the selected attributes (CGPA, co-curricular activities, teamwork skills and training) despite the facts that these factors were found to be significant contributing to getting hired (Shukran et al., 2006).

Similarly, it is very difficult to reflect the employability of the graduates with respect to the institutional promotional attributes (Table 6). There was no discriminating factor that helps differentiate between those employed and those who remained unemployed for 2004. The correct classification of employed to unemployed is only 52 per cent. However, in 2005 the percentage of correct classification has increased slightly, with an increase of 2.2 per cent from 52.0 per cent in 2004 to 54.2 per cent in 2005. The Counselling and Career Services do help the graduates to get employed (Chi-square = 23.47, $p = .0001$).

TABLE 5 Discriminant analysis between employment status of first-degree graduates on selected personal attributes necessary for employment

Personal attributes	Employment status (%)		
	2004 (N = 1,889)	2005 (N = 1,810)	
	Yes	No	
CGPA	2.60	2.60	2.77
Co-curricular activities	1.4 (0.8)	1.5 (0.7)	1.8 (1.0)
Teamwork skills	3.3 (0.5)	3.2 (0.5)	3.3 (0.5)
Training	1.8 (1.0)	1.7 (0.9)	2.0 (1.1)
Chi-square, df, p	9.74, 4, 0.04	5.25, 4, 0.263	
% correctly classified	52.7	52.2	

df = degree of freedom; p = significant level or probability

TABLE 6 Discriminant analysis between employment status of first-degree graduates on selected institutional attributes in promoting employability

Institutional attributes	Employment status (%)		
	2004 (N = 2,328)	2005 (N = 2,234)	
	Yes	No	
Academic programme	3.5 (0.6)	3.5 (0.5)	3.6 (0.6)
Counselling and career services	3.1 (0.8)	3.0 (0.8)	3.4 (0.8)
Teaching staff	3.7 (0.7)	3.6 (0.6)	3.7 (0.7)
University facilities	3.1 (0.6)	3.1 (0.6)	3.3 (0.5)
Chi-square, df, p	4.8, 4, 0.304	23.47, 4, 0.0001	
% correctly classified	52.0	54.2	

Therefore, on the whole it is difficult to predict whether a graduate would be employed or not based on personal characteristics while the institutional promotional attributes act as catalyst to the individual characteristics. There may be other factors, probably, attitudes and the persons as a whole.

Conclusion

Upon graduation, at least one in every two graduates will be hired. The duration taken to secure a job normally takes less than three months. The means of getting the first job is mainly through friends, followed by advertisements in the print media. Four in ten of the graduates were hired on a permanent basis while five in ten were hired on temporary and contract basis. The initial monthly income ranges between RM500–RM1,500. The employment sectors were the government, local private companies and multinational companies.

Most of the graduates obtained CGPA ranging from 2.51 to 3.00. Other than the third language proficiency, the graduates claimed that they were able to adapt to workplace demand, had problem solving skills, were confident to perform job, had team working skills, had communication skills, were proficient in written and speaking in both English language and bahasa Malaysia, were able to use computer application, and thought that their programmes were relevant to the job market.

IIUM as an institution has been rated highly by the graduates in promoting them in securing job. The institutional promotional characteristics include the

academic programme, the counselling and career services, the teaching staff capabilities and the universities facilities. However, human relations and counter services need to be improved.

The discriminating factor for personal attributes in employability is teamwork skills. This attribute is very important at workplace where one needs to work collectively toward achieving the organisational goals.

The discriminating factor for institutional promotional attributes in employability is counselling and career services. Therefore, the university should take the initiative to improve on the counselling and career services besides making contacts with the prospective employers, probably through its alumni, and making linkages with the industry.

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